
America's International Obligation in the Present Crisis

THE development of a fuller understanding of America's duty and opportunity in the present crisis, and the adoption of a definite policy of co-operation with other nations, now appears to be the one hope of a real solution of the economic and political problems facing the world. In the light of this situation, the Commission on International Justice and Goodwill of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America has prepared the following declaration, which has been officially approved by the Administrative Committee of the Federal Council:

The Drift Towards War

"The hope that after the War the world would move rapidly towards permanent peace and a well-ordered international life has been shattered. Growing unrest, political intrigues, physical distress and suffering, a disordered economic life, increasing distrust, suspicions and hatreds, all point to great disaster. If the drift be allowed to continue in the present direction new wars will cripple still further our civilization and may even carry it into eclipse for centuries.

"The failure of diplomatic and financial efforts to bring about a satisfactory settlement constitutes a direct challenge to the Christian Church. Righteousness, justice, and goodwill are the foundations of lasting peace. The problem is essentially a spiritual one and comes distinctly within the scope of the Church's duty.

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"The Administrative Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America believes that it is voicing the moral judgment of the overwhelming majority of thoughtful Christian people in making the following declaration:

The Call to America for Full Co-operation

"First: We believe that the United States should accept its full share of responsibility for bringing about an effective settlement of international problems. There are those who think the government has a mandate from the people to pursue a policy of aloofness. We do not thus understand the situation. The churches have declared, and must declare again, their convictions that generous co-operation among the nations is absolutely necessary to cope with the present hunger, strife, uncertainty and despair of the world. **The participation of the United States is indispensable to successful co-operative action.** An attitude of aloofness exposes our foreign policy to the charge of timidity and ineffectiveness. The present crisis in Europe summons us not to pass judgment on other peoples but in a spirit of humility and self-examination to review our own attitude as a nation and to ask ourselves how we may, by co-operation with other nations, help to meet the overwhelming responsibility which rests upon the entire world.

Another International Conference

"Second: We believe that the United States should take the initiative in calling an international conference to consider the whole economic and political situation in Europe, including reparations, debts, and armaments, in the endeavor to accomplish in Europe a result comparable to that which was achieved by the Four-Power Pact in the Far East. We welcome the suggestion of President Harding in his message to Congress on December 8, when, in referring to that agreement

he said, 'It might be made a model for like assurances wherever in the world any common interests are concerned. . . . We believe . . . in the value of conference and consultation, in the effectiveness of leaders of nations looking each other in the face.'

The Need for Unselfishness in America

"In calling such a conference we believe that the United States should make it known, as it did at the opening session of the Conference on the Limitation of Armament, that we are ready to make, in common with other nations, whatever concessions, financial or otherwise, may be necessary to bring about an ordered international life. We are convinced that a sacrificial spirit on our part would evoke a willingness in other nations also to make the adjustments that may be needed. Our plans for reconstruction should include not only our allies but our former enemies. Bankers, economists, and business men are telling us that only the re-establishment of normal economic conditions in Europe can bring prosperity to American agriculture and industry. What they declare necessary on the basis of enlightened self-interest, we declare necessary also from the standpoint of the Christian ideal of brotherhood. The well-being of our own country is inseparably bound up with an unselfish consideration of the well-being of the other nations of the world.

Justice in the Near East

"Third: We believe that our Government will not be true to its ideals unless it records a definite protest against any settlement of the Near Eastern question on a basis

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of expediency or commercial advantage, and without some amends for tragic wrongs which have resulted in the persecution and practical destruction of the Armenian people, and the confiscation of their property. For the good of all nations wrong must be righted. We would urge that in any further conference on Near East problems our Government should give full power to its delegates in all matters in which the rights of humanity are at stake and share with the Allied Powers the responsibility for reaching conclusions based upon righteousness and justice. If the Lausanne Conference is not renewed, we believe that our Government should co-operate and, if necessary, take the initiative in the appointment of an international commission which would deal with the whole subject of the refugee and orphan problem in the Near East, and that it should offer to bear its share in providing what-

ever may be necessary financially to establish these people in some place of safety and opportunity.

The Duty of the Churches

"We call upon the membership of the Churches throughout the country to make a united appeal in behalf of this program of international co-operation, to make known their attitude to the President and their representatives in Congress, and to assure the Administration of their aid in developing a strong public opinion in its support. **We especially urge Christian people everywhere to approach these momentous issues on their merits, irrespective of all partisan considerations.** We make this plea on the highest moral and religious ground, believing that beneath all these problems lies the need of a great spiritual awakening and a deeper conviction that Christian principles are as binding upon national as upon personal conduct."

Concrete Suggestions on What to Do

The following suggestions are offered concerning practical steps which may be taken in every community in securing the adoption of the international policy outlined in the foregoing declaration:

What Ministers Can Do

1. In the regular services of public worship, preach upon the Christian ideal for international life and the responsibility of America in the present crisis to play its full part in co-operation with other nations in securing a better international life. The sanctions of religious faith and of moral idealism must be brought strongly to the support of the policy of American co-operation.

2. Organize special public meetings or open forums for a discussion of America's international policy and the necessity for her bearing her share of the present burden of the world.

3. Secure from the congregation or groups within the congregation, such as men's clubs and Bible classes, vigorous resolutions urging a program of co-operation on the part of the United States with other nations of the world. Send such resolutions to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and your representatives in Congress. In this way the impression that the people of the United States are not yet ready for America to enter into the councils of the nations can be effectively dissipated.

4. Circulate literature upon Christian international ideals, the necessity of getting rid of war, and the duty of America to join in world co-opera-

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tion. Copies of this pamphlet and of other literature for general distribution can be had at cost upon request.

5. Organize special classes for the study and discussion of the meaning of Christianity for our

present international problems, using either "The Christian Crusade for a Warless World," published by the Federal Council's Commission on International Justice and Goodwill, or other literature.

What Federations of Churches or Ministerial Associations Can Do

1. Confer with Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade, Farmers' Organizations, and Labor Organizations, concerning the possibility of a united program in the community among all the forces which are interested in securing fuller co-operation on the part of America.

2. Organize united mass meetings on the part of the churches to voice the moral conviction of the need for American co-operation in securing world peace. In most instances, speakers can be secured in the community. If outside speakers are necessary, write to the Church Peace Union, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York City, or the Federal Council's Commission on International Justice and

Goodwill, 105 East 22nd Street, New York City.

3. Organize a special committee, wherever one does not already exist, on International Justice and Goodwill, or some similar subject, representing all the churches for the purpose of promoting persistently their activity in behalf of world peace.

4. Keep in touch with the Federal Council's Commission on International Justice and Goodwill, and the Church Peace Union, so that there may be a concerted movement throughout the country.

What Individual Christians Can Do

1. Accept your personal responsibility for doing all in your power to develop public opinion upon the necessity of America's playing its full part in international life. Talk about the question and discuss it on every possible occasion.

2. Write to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and your representatives in Congress urging them to adopt a program of full international co-operation. Such personal letters

of a thoughtful character are often much more effective than formal resolutions.

3. Write short letters to the editor of your local newspaper expressing your judgment on international co-operation.

4. Encourage the formation of study groups on international questions in your church, or in other organizations with which you are connected.

COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE AND GOODWILL
FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AMERICA

105 EAST 22ND STREET
NEW YORK CITY